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Ceremony Honors Former Senator Hill

NLM's Lister Hill Center Building Dedicated

On May 22, 1980, 200 leaders from the health community gathered at the Library's new $23-million Lister Hill National Center for Biomedical Communications to witness the Center's formal dedication. **Lister Hill**, the former Senator from Alabama for whom the Center was named, was present for the occasion.

The remarkable new building provides NLM with an unparalleled opportunity to apply modern communications technologies to the information needs of the health community. Adjacent to the Library, the new facility consists of a three-level podium-type base and a ten-story superstructure. Within it are offices, unique biomedical communications laboratories, computer and telecommunications facilities, audiovisual workshop spaces and production areas, meeting rooms, and an auditorium.

The dedication keynote address was presented by **Patricia R. Harris**, Secretary of Health and Human Services. She called the new LHC building "a fitting tribute to a man who cared deeply about the health of the American people—a man who made that concern his special interest throughout 47 years of public service."

The Secretary pointed out many of the dramatic changes in American life, particularly in medical practice, since 1923, the year Lister Hill first entered Congress. Many of the improvements in health, she said, could be attributed to his foresight. Among his many legislative accomplishments, Senator Hill was cosponsor of the National Library of Medicine Act (1956) and was a vigorous advocate of the Library's research and development activities. His concern for biomedical communications is demonstrated by his 1965 statement: "We must develop a communications system so that the miraculous triumphs of modern science can be taken from the laboratory and transmitted to all in need." These words are now engraved in the Center's lobby, over a bronze bust of Senator Hill.

The dream of Lister Hill came closer to reality in 1968 when a joint Congressional resolution recommended the construction of a new facility for NLM to be designated the Lister Hill National Center for Biomedical Communications, thus perpetuating the name of the Senate's "Statesman for Health." Progress on the building continued: funds for the architectural and engineering design were approved in 1971, the design was completed in 1975, funds were appropriated for construction in 1976, and in the summer of 1977, structural work commenced.

NLM Programs Now Together

The Lister Hill Center building houses a number of the Library's programs. A major component is of course the Lister Hill National Center for Biomedical Communications—the research and development component of NLM. This division began its existence organizationally at NLM in 1968, the result of the same resolution that authorized the LHC building. Initially housed within the existing Library building, the Lister Hill Center has pioneered in the application of the latest computer and communications technology to the problems of information transfer.

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In addition to the Lister Hill Center, the new building houses the closely related programs of the National Medical Audiovisual Center (NMAC). Originally a part of the Center for Disease Control, NMAC was transfered organizationally to the Library in 1967. However, because of space limitations in Bethesda, its staff had remained in Atlanta, Georgia.

Other Library divisions in the new building include programs which either began or were greatly expanded after the earlier NLM building was occupied in 1962. These include the Extramural Programs (first authorized in 1965) and the Toxicology Information Program (1966). The MEDLARS operation—both the computers and the network management personnel—are or soon will be part of the facility. One floor of the building has been turned over to the National Institute of Health's Fogarty International Center.

As Secretary Harris pointed out, the fact that finally all of the Library's programs are housed together for the first time, marks a significant new opportunity for mutually beneficial interaction among the Library's various activities.

The Secretary called the new building a "dramatic step toward overcoming the communications problems faced in the biomedical sciences." She closed her remarks by expressing her confidence that the new facilities will help "bridge the gap between break-through and follow-through," echoing an earlier statement of Lister Hill.

Dedication Activities

Secretary Harris's speech was the centerpiece of a full day of activities associated with the dedication.

In the morning, visitors had the opportunity to view a film covering the history of the Library and its new building, and then to see first-hand some of the Center's modern offices, NMAC workshops and studios, and LHC technology and engineering equipment.

The dedication ceremony followed a special luncheon in the Center's dining room. Guests included well known medical educators, librarians, and information scientists, directors of the Regional Medical Libraries, the NLM Board of Regents, directors of the international MEDLARS centers, and officials from throughout the Department of Health and Human Services.

In his welcoming remarks, NLM Director **Martin M. Cummings, M.D.**, emphasized that the theme of the dedication was not so much the story of a magnificent building or of modern communications, but rather to honor Lister Hill, "...the humanitarian who was the major sponsor of legislation which advanced the progress of medical research, education, and health care in our country."

Secretary Harris was then introduced by the Assistant Secretary for Health and Surgeon General of the Public Health Service **Julius Richmond.** (Dr. Richmond replaced NIH Director **Donald S. Fredrickson, M.D.**, who on short notice was called by the President to accompany him on a trip to view the volcano damage in Oregon.)

Following the Secretary's address, Lister Hill heard tributes by the honorable **Paul G. Rogers**, former U.S. Representative from Florida; **S. Richardson Hill, Jr., M.D.**, President of the University of Alabama and Chairman of the NLM Board of Regents; and **Lois Ann Colaianni**, President of the Medical Library Association. Paul Rogers, the former Senator's colleague in Congress, told of Lister Hill's early interest in medicine—his father was a pioneering surgeon who had studied with Joseph Lister and had named his son after the famous nineteenth century English surgeon. Dr. S. Richardson Hill, although not related to Lister Hill, said that he

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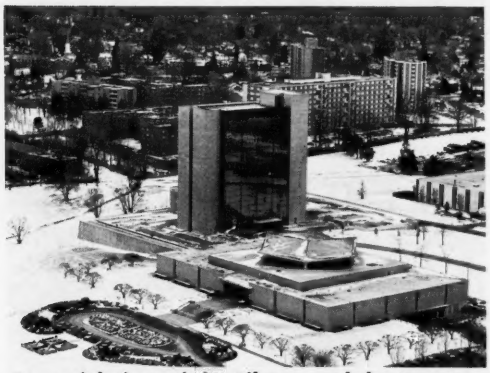
Dedication Day—May 22, 1980



An aerial view of the Library and the ten-story Lister Hill Center. The new building allows NLM to centralize many of its programs into one facility and frees space in the Library for the collection.

Former Senator Hill, for whom the Lister Hill Center is named, signed the guestbook shortly after his arrival for the day's dedication events. Looking on are the Senator's twin sister, Mrs. C.G. Laslie, and his son, Mr. L. Lister Hill, both of Montgomery, Alabama. J.C. Wilson (left), also of Montgomery, and Robert B. Mehnert, the NLM Public Information Officer, assist.

Secretary of Health and Human Services, Patricia R. Harris, delivered the dedication keynote address. Other participants in the ceremony are, from left, NLM Director Martin M. Cummings, M.D., the Honorable Paul G. Rogers, Lois Ann Colaianni, Under Secretary of Health and Human Services Nathan J. Stark, Assistant Secretary for Health, Julius Richmond, M.D., S. Richardson Hill, Jr., M.D., and the guest of honor, former Senator Lister Hill.

claimed spiritual cousinship, having long admired the Senator for his forcefulness in advancing the cause of improved health care. Mrs. Colaianni spoke for the thousands of medical librarians as she thanked Senator Hill for his great legislative contributions to the development and improvement of health-science libraries.

After a brief reception on the outdoor terrace of the new building, guests returned to the auditorium for a program of scientific papers on the theme *Perspectives in Biomedical Communications*. This final part of the dedication ceremony was chaired by the Director of the Lister Hill Center, **Lionel M. Bernstein, M.D.** The program gave five leaders in communications an opportunity to share with colleagues their individual viewpoints on the field's current status as well as its future directions.

W.N. Hubbard, Jr., M.D., President of the Upjohn Company and former Chairman of the NLM Board of Regents, spoke on "The View from the U.S. Medical Community." In his talk Dr. Hubbard emphasized the importance of health care delivery, particularly its humanistic value and its relationship to biomedical communications.

Sune Bergstrom, M.D., Rector Emeritus of the Karolinska Institutet discussed "The View from the International Community." He described the positive impact modern information transfer was having in many countries, but also commented on the pressing needs for improved information technologies in the underdeveloped countries.

"The View from the Library Community," was presented by **Robert Wedgeworth**, Executive Director of the American Library Association. Mr. Wedgeworth detailed the important and changing role of libraries in biomedical communications.

Two final papers provided perspectives on current and future information technologies with their wide-ranging impact on information transfer. **Lewis Branscomb, Ph.D.**, Vice President and Chief Scientist, IBM Corporation, discussed "Working Smart: New Roles for Computers," and **William O. Baker, Ph.D.**, Chairman of the Board of Bell Laboratories, spoke on "The View from the Field of Information Science."

That evening, over one hundred attended the Board of Regents' dinner, also held in the Center's dining room. Dr. Cummings thanked retiring Regents **S. Richardson Hill, Jr., M.D., Doris Merritt, M.D.**, and **Cecil Sheps, M.D.**, for their service on the Board. *Ex officio* member **Colonel John C. Richards** (U.S. Army) was also attending his last Regents' meeting. The after-dinner speaker was **Peter D. Olch, M.D.**, Deputy Chief of NLM's History of Medicine Division.